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ABSTRACT

Representing the culmination of a project undertaken at the Louisiana State University School of Library and Information Science, this two-part report evaluates the feasibility of using bookmobiles as a resource expansion mechanism for public libraries in the future, and provides an overview of current bookmobile services. The report, which is based on the results of a telephone survey and a literature review, begins by presenting three bibliographies of bookmobile literature from the United States as well as from international sources. Comprising two-thirds of the document, the bibliographies cover monographs (87 references), reports (53 references), and journals (329 references from 89 unique journals), and are arranged alphabetically by author. The survey, which makes up the second part of the report, approached a population of 448 libraries known to have provided bookmobile service in 1987. Of the 446 that responded, 440 still provided such service at the time of data collection. It was found that there were between 1,130 and 1,200 bookmobiles in the United States in 1988, and that more than one-third of the major public library systems provided bookmobile service, with approximately 6% of their total circulation coming from bookmobiles. It is predicted that in the coming decade, collections will include more video and audio material and will emphasize material for children and the elderly. (SD)

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The Bookmobile, A Service Mechanism for the Nineties?

By

Bert R. Boyce* and Judith I. Boyce**

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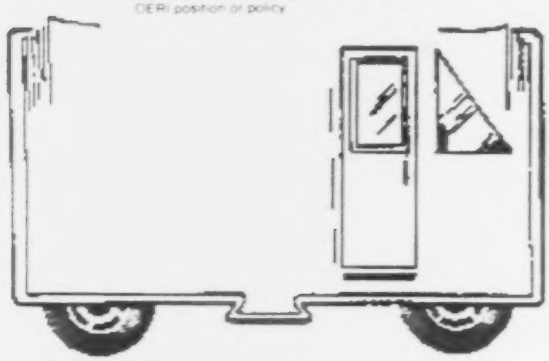

* Professor
Library & Information Science
Louisiana State University

** Library Consultant
State Library of Louisiana

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The Bookmobile, a Service Mechanism for the Nineties?

FINAL REPORT ON GRANT # CLR 4048-A FROM THE COUNCIL ON LIBRARY RESOURCES.

by

Bert R. Boyce* and Judith I. Boyce**

*Professor, School of Library & Info. Science, Louisiana State University

**Library Consultant State Library of Louisiana

Produced at the Research Center Annex
School of Library and Information Science
Louisiana State University

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Forward

This report represents the culmination of a project undertaken at the Louisiana State University School of Library and Information Science, under the sponsorship of the Council on Library Resources. The focus of the project was an attempt to evaluate the bookmobile as a resource expansion mechanism for public libraries in the last decade of the twentieth century, and to provide a picture of current bookmobile service as it exists at the close of the ninth decade of that century.

The report is based upon the results of an extensive telephone survey and a review of the literature. A by-product is the inclusion of three bibliographies of bookmobile literature. These cover the report literature, the journal literature, and the monograph literature, and are arranged alphabetically by author's name or by title where no author could be determined. The editing and verification of the entries reflects only the most basic effort but it is hoped that sufficient information is available to be of some assistance to librarians, students, and others interested in this outreach mechanism.

Bert R. Boyce, Professor of Library and Information Science, Louisiana State University

Judith I. Boyce, Public Library Consultant, State Library of Louisiana

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Author distribution by more than one contribution:

anonymous	27
Buschendorf, H	8
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ABSTRACT

The bookmobile has been a key resource expansion mechanism for public library service in the middle decades of the twentieth century. A survey, based upon a population of 448 libraries known to have provided bookmobile service in 1987, 446 of which responded, and 440 of which still provided such service at the time of data collection, provides a picture of the place of bookmobile service in increasing the availability of public library collections today, and its potential for the 1990's.

There were between 1130 and 1200 bookmobiles in the United States in 1988. More than one third of major public library systems in the United States are providing bookmobile service. Seventy-two percent of the bookmobiles in use were purchased for less than $45,000, and seventy-five percent of them cost less than $2,000 annually to maintain. Forty-eight percent of surveyed libraries are currently in the market for a new bookmobile and ninety percent expect to continue to provide mobile service. About six percent of the circulation of the surveyed libraries come from bookmobiles. A third of the operating vehicles now have some form of two-way mobile communication, and seventeen percent have an automated circulation system or catalog, although the Gaylord charge machine remains the most popular item of on board technology.

The effects of demographic trends for the nineties on bookmobile service are discussed.

BACKGROUND

This report to the Council on Library Resources details an investigation of the scope and impact of bookmobile service in the United States at the end of the ninth decade of the twentieth century to project the role of such service in the nineties. Specifically the goal was to identify the the number of bookmobiles in service, their circulation relative to other delivery points, the sorts of programs currently being run from bookmobiles, the populations being served, the sort of stops that are being made, the relationship of such service to the presence of other outreach services, and to suggest some means of estimating the cost of resource relocation as opposed to resource duplication. If the bookmobile is a viable alternative to the acquisition of branch library collections considerable savings may be realized through the sharing of resources through relocation.

The study has the most direct applicability to service planning for public libraries in the next decade. Those libraries that engage in outreach service of any kind must regularly consider whether the bookmobile remains a viable alternative to books by mail programs, additional branch libraries, and less expensive delivery programs. There are also some implications for school libraries which are impacted by bookmobile programs.

The large urban public library may do well to consider the bookmobile rather than the acquisition of multiple branch locations and their associated collections. The rural public library system will need to consider whether the initiation, termination or continuation of bookmobile service is their best choice.

The Bookmobile has been a key resource expansion mechanism for public library service in the middle decades of the twentieth century. No comprehensive summary of bookmobile service has been produced in the last twenty years although a considerable literature exists. It is to be hoped that what follows will assist in providing a clear overall picture of the place of bookmobile service in increasing the availability of public library collections today, and its potential for the 1990's.

OBJECTIVES

Since 1905 when Mary Titcomb originated the idea of a wagon designed to provide direct book service to rural areas, the bookmobile has been a resource expansion mechanism for public libraries.[1] The bookmobile is the only available mechanism for moving a collection rather than duplicating it to expand service. In 1965 there were nearly 2000 bookmobiles in service in the United States.[2] It is likely that the height of bookmobile service came in the early 1970's. The dramatic increase in gasoline prices later in this decade undoubtedly caused many libraries to reconsider the cost of the service and to drop it. The current scope of bookmobile service in the United States is still significant. In 1985 forty-six Louisiana bookmobiles generated nine percent of the public library circulation in the state while 314 branch libraries generated forty-seven percent.[3] An estimate of bookmobiles in service made below indicates 1200 as the likely maximum current figure.

An investigation of the scope and impact of bookmobile service in the United States at the end of the ninth decade of the twentieth century may be useful in projecting the role of such service into the nineties. Specifically it would seem useful to estimate the scope of bookmobile service, circulation relative to other delivery mechanisms, the sorts of programs currently being run from bookmobiles, the populations being served, the sort of stops that are being made, and if possible, the cost of resource relocation as opposed to resource duplication.

PREVIOUS WORK

Since Brown's classic work in 1967 there has been no real summary of bookmobile service in the United States. There are a great many papers on local service[4], and on comparative service techniques[5], and a large number of statistics have been collected by state libraries and published in annual reports. There is nothing that offers a comprehensive picture, however. The most extensive data collected is neither easily available nor directly addresses such questions as urban bookmobile service.[6]

METHODOLOGY

To create a comprehensive picture of bookmobile service as it exists in the United States today, and in so far as possible, to project the future of bookmobile services in the nineties an extensive sample of libraries offering the service was required. While the American Library Directory has records for over 36,000 libraries, 9841 of which are indicated to be public libraries, the field indicating bookmobile service is not searchable in the Dialog machine accessible version of the file. However, the 448 library systems which reported that they provided bookmobile service in the Adult Services in the Eighties (ASE) project were available in machine readable form.[7] The ASE study surveyed every public library system with a reported service population exceeding twenty-five thousand. This amounted to 1,758 library systems, and responses were received from 1,175 systems. [8] The conclusion, of course, is that thirty-eight percent of the library systems serving twenty-five thousand or more population provided bookmobile service in 1987.

The population for this study was the 448 library systems from the ASE response group that indicated bookmobile service. This option identifies four and one half percent of the public libraries in the country, all known to have provided bookmobile service. An instrument was designed to collect the data and a staff member of each library in the group was approached on the telephone to determine their willingness to participate in the survey. A response rate of over ninety-nine percent was achieved with 446 agreeing and participating. However, six of these, or one percent, no longer offered bookmobile service, reducing the meaningful response to 440 libraries. This is a two percent reduction in the sample size but still four and one half percent of the public libraries in the American Library Directory, and ninety-eight percent of the library systems known to be offering bookmobile service from the Adult Services in the Eighties study. The responses covered 46 of the 50 states, with Alaska, Maine, Vermont, and Wyoming not selected. Kentucky had the largest representation with 63 contributions, and nine states contributed a single survey. Maine discontinued bookmobile service in 1981.[9]

RESULTS

Results of the study are divided into sections on various aspects of interest. The data presented here are primarily in percentage form, either as a percent of total libraries surveyed or as a percent of total surveyed bookmobiles on the road, or both. The total utilized for the percentages reflects the response rate for the particular question. There is reason to believe that these percentages accurately reflect the character of bookmobile service in the United States as the final decade of the twentieth century approaches.

HOW MANY BOOKMOBILES

The two percent drop in libraries providing bookmobile service which occurred between the data gathering for the ASE project in 1987 and the data reported here may

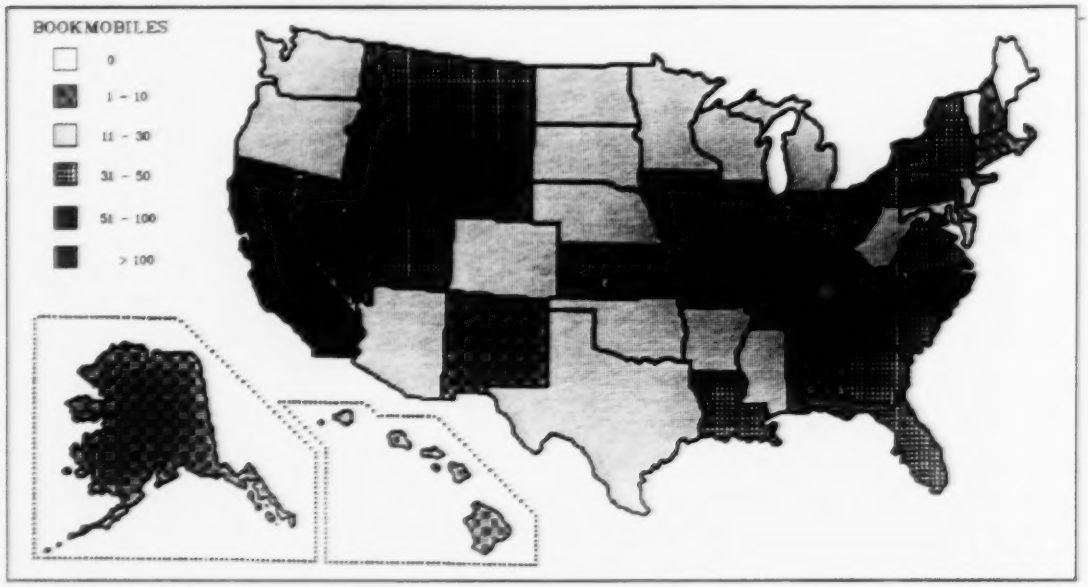
be taken as an indication of declining use of the medium. It must be pointed out, however, that no information is available on libraries that may be adding bookmobile service and, in fact, the sampling procedure excludes the possibility of learning of any such increase in service. It is thus possible that no net decrease has occurred at all.

About 100 new bookmobiles are ordered each year.[10] Between 1980 and 1987 Statistical Abstracts indicates U.S. public libraries built 181 branches and 272 headquarters buildings, or a total of 453 fixed location service facilities.[11] For the same period Fox shows 645 buildings completed.[12] Thus on average between 57 and 80 buildings were added each year in the eighties. No information on retirement rates for either sort of service location has been located, but the building figures from Statistical Abstracts are based on the differences in reported totals and are most likely net of additions and retirements while those from Fox are construction totals. The bookmobile figure is based upon sales and does not account for retirements.

The survey for the Adult Services in the Eighties Project (ASE) indicates that 1,014 of the 4,215 responding libraries provide bookmobile service.[13] That would seem to imply that nearly twenty-five percent of public libraries in the United States are currently making use of bookmobiles. If we use the figure reported below in this survey of 1.2 bookmobiles per library, then the bookmobile population could be estimated at one quarter of the 9841 public libraries in the American Library Directory, times 1.2 or 2952. Another view of the ASE data would indicate that thirty-eight percent of library systems serving a population over twenty-five thousand now provide bookmobile service. Thirty-eight percent of 1758 ASE reported systems is 668 library systems, which at 1.2 vehicles per system is 802 units. It would seem to be a safe guess that systems serving less than twenty-five thousand people are operating at least 200 bookmobiles, and thus that the 1988 bookmobile population is between one and three thousand. Since Brown reported nearly 2000 vehicles in service in 1965, the high end of the range may seem the better estimate.[14]

However, statistics are now available from the Federal-State Cooperative System for Public Library Data (FSCS) that were collected by the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES).[15] These include reported totals of bookmobiles from public libraries in 44 states and the District of Columbia. The number provided is 1054 bookmobiles from 7403 libraries responding to this particular question of the 7910 surveyed. New Jersey did not respond to this question, and Alabama, Georgia, Kansas, Maine, Nevada, and Tennessee are the states not responding. While we do not know the total bookmobile population in these states, we can establish a minimum figure based upon those responses that we received from our survey. In Alabama we surveyed nine library systems that among themselves put 10 bookmobiles on the road. Georgia provided 22 responses and reported 33 bookmobiles. Kansas reported a bookmobile in each of two libraries, Maine did not appear in our sample, and Nevada and Tennessee each reported one bookmobile. Our data also indicate a minimum of 12 bookmobiles in New Jersey. Thus we may safely add 59 bookmobiles to the FSCS figure yielding 1113. We also have 12 surveys from Michigan where FSCS reports only 4 bookmobiles in service, and 9 surveys from Massachusetts where FSCS reports no bookmobiles in service. Therefore the addition of another 17 vehicles increasing the minimum to 1130 seems justified. Using the FSCS reported figure of 1054 from 43 states and the District of Columbia the average number of bookmobiles per reporting entity is 23.95 bookmobiles. An estimate of the total number of bookmobiles can be obtained by multiplying this number by 51. Thus we can be confident of a minimum of 1130 bookmobiles in the U.S. in 1988, and reasonably assume

that the maximum does not much exceed 1222. In fact, since there are no bookmobiles currently in Maine, 1200 is a fair maximum.

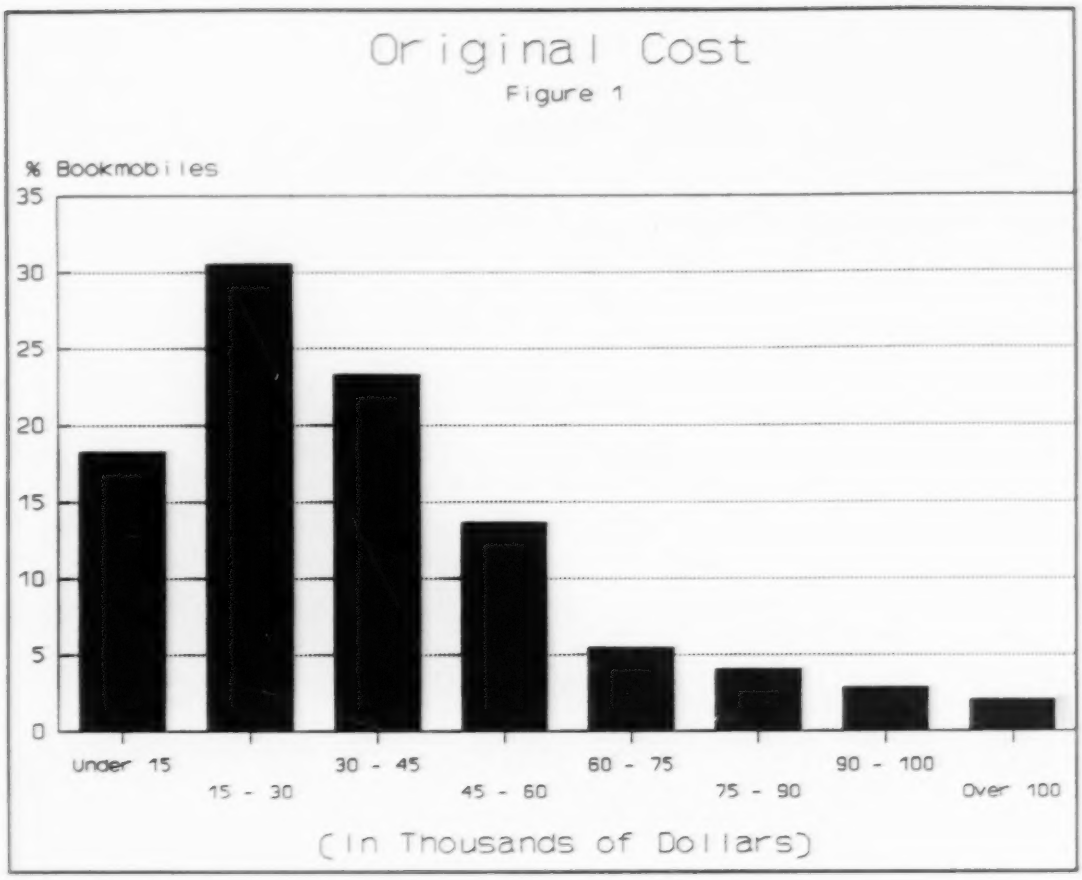


The average library system providing bookmobile service is operating 1.22 vehicles for this purpose. Sixty-two percent are reported to utilize a bus type chasse, thirty-five percent a van type chasse, and three percent are tractor-trailer designs. Twelve vehicles based upon recreational vehicles were reported in the open ended comments.

COSTS OF BOOKMOBILE SERVICE

The original cost of thirty-one percent of bookmobiles in service was between $15,000 and $30,000. Twenty-three percent of original purchase prices were between $30,000 and $45,000, and eighteen percent were below $15,000. Thus seventy-two percent of bookmobiles on the road in 1988 were purchased for less than $45,000 and forty-nine percent below $30,000. Two percent cost more than $100,000. Of the four hundred and seventeen bookmobiles for which age data was available, 2% were constructed prior to 1970, 42% built in the 1970's, and 66% in the 1980's.

Ninety-one percent of the bookmobiles in service report annual maintenance costs less than $4,000, seventy-five percent less than $2000, and thirty-four percent below $1000. Less than one percent indicate maintenance expense above $10,000, less than two percent between $8000 and $10,000, two percent between $6000 and $8000, and four and one half percent between $4000 and $6000. Higher initial cost does not appear to be an indication of higher maintenance cost. Of the 69 bookmobiles whose cost exceeded $60,000, only 3 cost more than $4,000 per year to maintain. Twenty-four of these, or thirty-five percent, had maintenance costs of less than $1000 per year. A bookmobile, even a very expensive one,

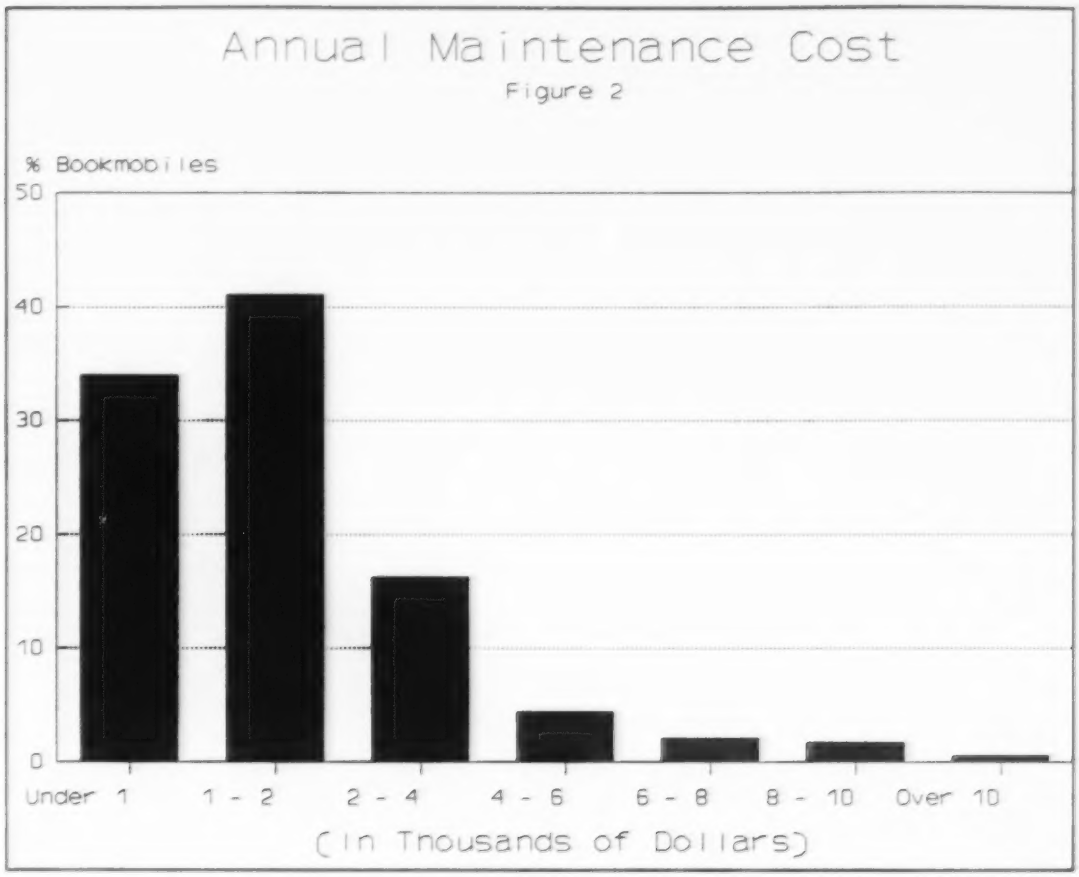


can be expected to incur maintenance costs below $2000 per year.

EXTENT OF SERVICE

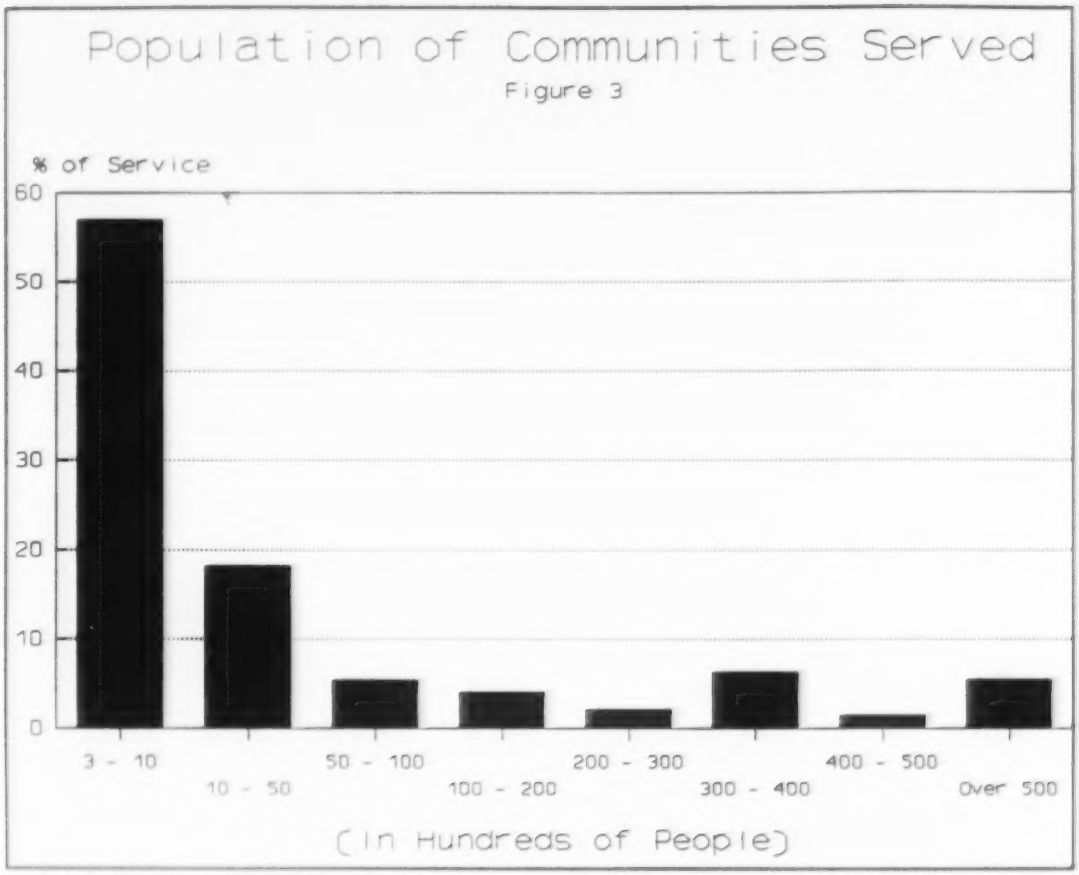
Circulation figures for both bookmobiles and the overall system were reported by ninety-seven percent of the library systems. The average system circulation for 1988 was 768,463 and the average bookmobile circulation approximately six percent of that figure at 44,157. The average fixed service location (FSL) circulation (computed by subtracting the total bookmobile circulation from the total circulation and dividing by the number of FSLs) was 123,572. Thus it would appear that the average bookmobile circulates something less than a third of the materials circulated by the average FSL. If we assume a ten year vehicle life, an initial cost of $45,000 and $2,000 per year for maintenance then the mobile facility costs $6,500 per year or about fourteen cents per circulation. No reliable estimate of fuel costs is available but if one assumes $50 per week that would add $2,500 to the annual costs and raise the cost per circulation to twenty cents. One could compare this figure to the sum of the rental and annual maintenance and utility costs for a FSL divided by its annual circulation in order to get a performance comparison.

Ninety percent of the surveyed libraries expect to continue bookmobile service in the



90's, and fifty-three percent expect their bookmobile service to increase over the next ten years. A decrease in service is anticipated by fourteen percent, and thirty-three percent look for the status quo. Forty-eight percent are currently planning the purchase of a new bookmobile. Those who expect an increase in bookmobile service stress a perceived growth in current use. Many mention elderly users as a growth area which is providing pressure for increased service. New branch construction and perceived declining use are the reasons presented by those expecting a lower level of bookmobile service. In those cases where no net change was anticipated several possible areas of service redirection were mentioned. The most prominent of these was increased service to the elderly, but increased and more innovative service to children was also considered likely to require a shift of resources.

The bookmobile continues to be very much a means of extending library service to rural areas. Fifty-seven percent of bookmobile stops are in communities with populations below 1000 and eighteen percent in communities whose population is between 1000 and 5000. Less than six percent of the incorporated communities served are larger than 50,000. This does not imply that the mechanism is not important in highly populated areas, however. There are naturally far fewer large communities to serve. The 1989 Statistical Abstract lists 468 such communities and 106 of these, or twenty-four percent, are receiving bookmobile service from our 440 surveyed library systems.

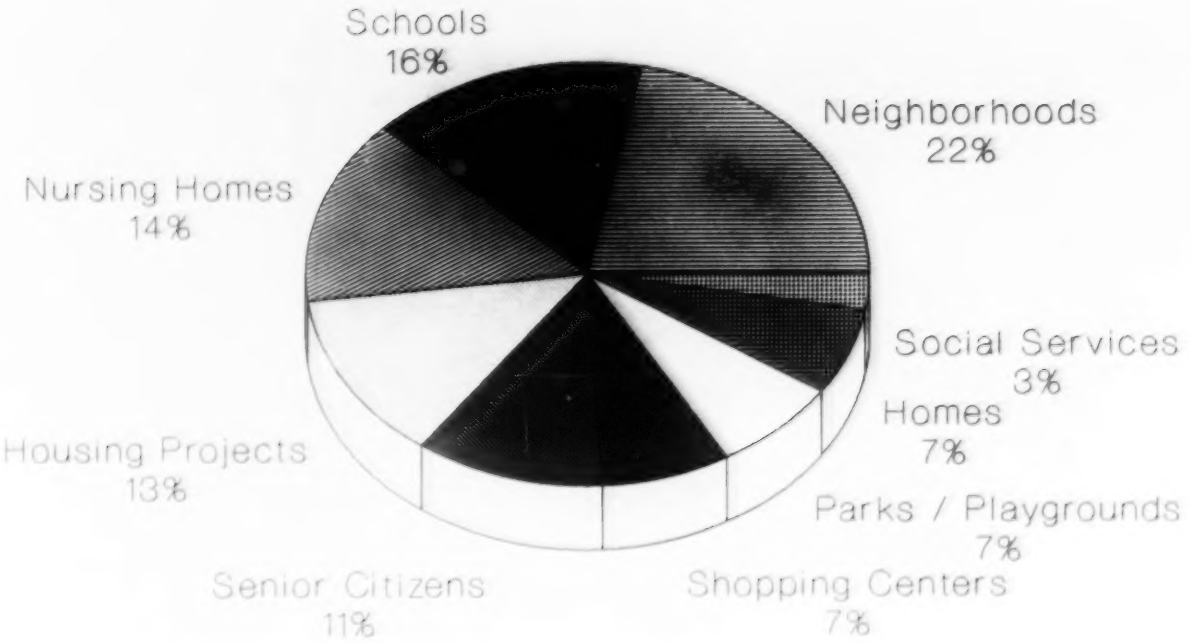


The largest number of stops, twenty-two percent, are made to serve communities and neighborhoods, and the second largest number, sixteen percent, at schools. In terms of hours per site, however, thirty-one percent of stop time occurs at schools and only twenty percent at community stops. Nursing homes account for fourteen percent of the stops and ten percent of the stop time, while housing projects involve thirteen percent of the stops and eleven percent of the stop time. Senior citizens centers garner eleven percent of the visits but only eight percent of the stop hours. The average stop appears to be just under an hour, while the average school stop approaches two hours. The average non-school visit is about three quarters of an hour.

In the open ended responses fifty systems reported stops at day care centers and twenty three at prisons and jails, which adds two meaningful categories for which survey data is not available.

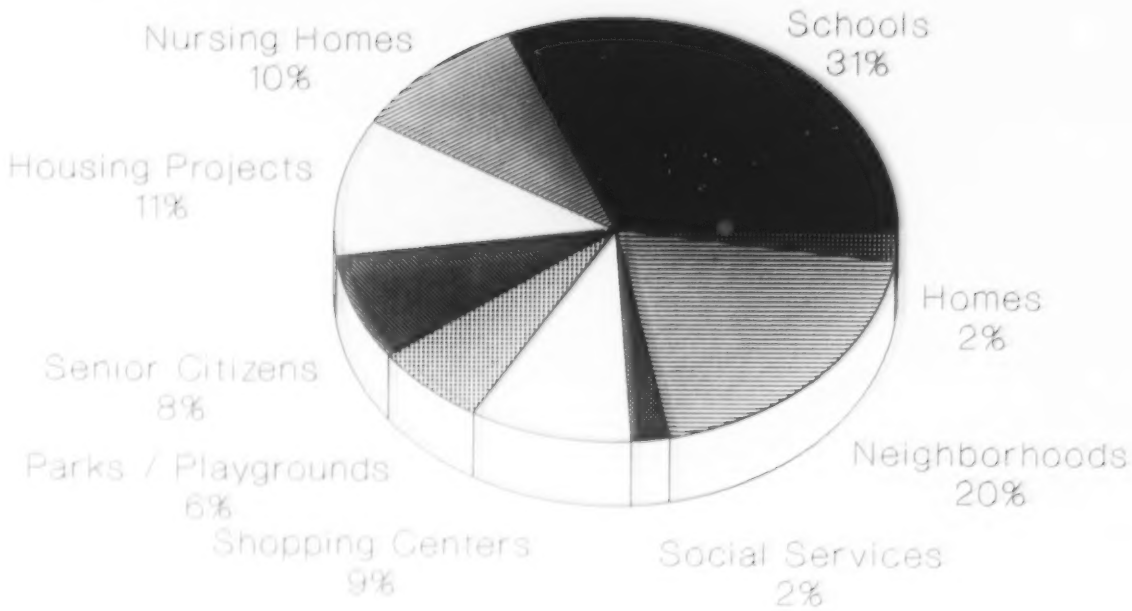
Stopping Locations

Figure 4



Stop Time

Figure 5



STAFF TRAINING

Continuing education for the staff assigned to bookmobiles continues to be a major problem. From this data, sixty-six percent of bookmobile personnel do not have a college degree, only eight percent have the MLS, and the other twenty-six percent have attained a Bachelor's degree. The open ended comments indicate that about twenty percent have some college courses. Vavrek's survey suggests that seventeen percent have attained the Master's degree. Either figure suggests a strong need for in-service training. Forty-three percent of libraries provide their bookmobile staff with in-service training in reference and thirty-seven percent in reader's advisory. However, eighty percent of these libraries offer reader's advisory service from their bookmobiles and fifty-seven percent offer reference service. Interlibrary loan is a topic of education in twenty-two percent of the sample libraries. Interlibrary loan service is offered by eighty- three percent of the bookmobiles. Instruction in driving safety is provided by twenty five percent of the libraries and in the use of the catalog in twenty-three percent. Just over six percent provide direction in booktalking, and in storytime programming twenty-two percent provide some training. Thirty-two percent of bookmobiles provide storytime programs.

Training Offered Bookmobile Staff

Table 1

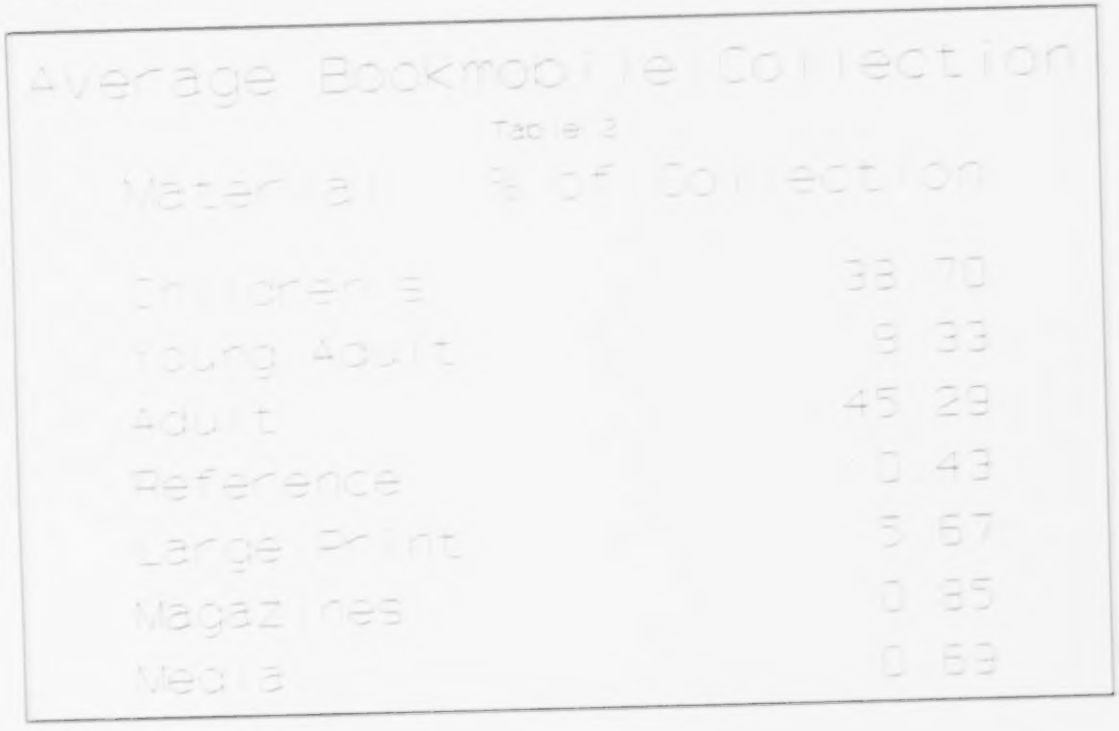
Area	Percent of Libraries	
Reference	43	18
Reader's Advisory	37	27
Interlibrary Loan	28	64
Storytime Programming	21	82
Driving Safety	24	55
Bookmobile Maintenance	20	91
Book Talking	6	36
Use of Library Catalog	22	73

CHARACTER OF THE COLLECTION

Over fifty percent of bookmobiles operate with an on board collection of less than 2500 items. The totally separate bookmobile collection is uncommon. Thirty percent of the libraries draw exclusively from their main collection, and fifty-five percent maintain a bookmobile collection but regularly draw from the main collection as well. The average on board collection is thirty-nine percent children's books and forty-five percent adult materials, with eight percent devoted to young adult materials. Children are reported to constitute forty-five percent of use, young adults seven percent, and adults forty-nine

percent. Large print books make up over five percent of the collection, and media, magazines and reference works make up the rest. Seventy- five percent of bookmobiles carry dictionaries and sixty-eight percent almanacs. Over fifty percent have encyclopedia and an atlas on board. Handbooks of some kind are to be found on thirty- six percent, and directories on twenty-eight percent. Reference service is offered on fifty-seven percent of the bookmobiles. Generally on board materials seem to reflect use patterns.

Magazines are not a large part of the traveling collections. Forty-four percent of the bookmobiles carry five or fewer magazines. Only twenty percent carry more than twenty magazines. Thirty-eight percent carry audio cassettes, however, and twenty- four percent carry phonograph records. The video cassette is found in nearly twelve percent of the traveling collections.

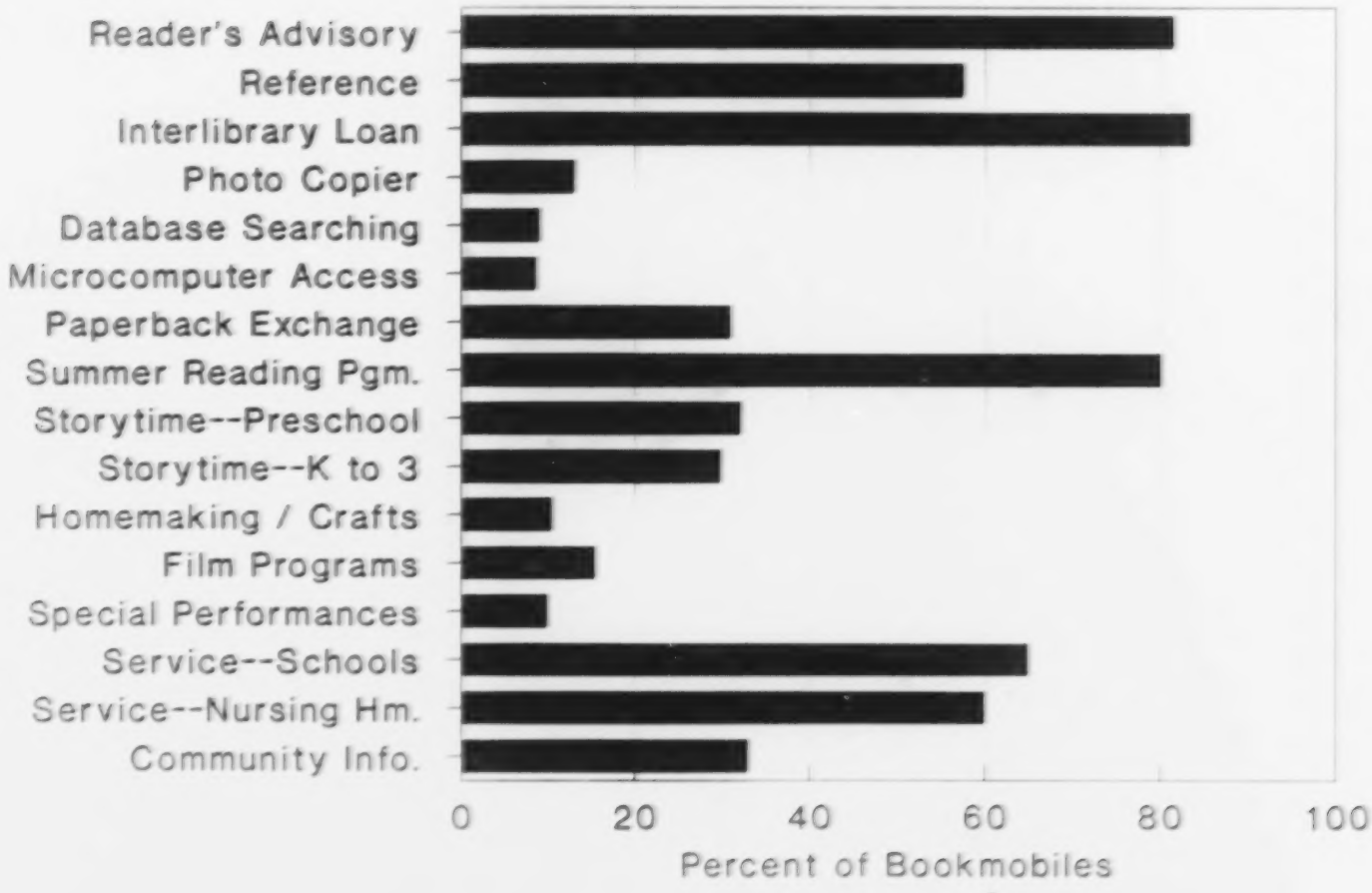


SERVICES OFFERED

It is common for libraries offering bookmobile service to offer other outreach services as well. Shut-in service is provided by fifty-nine percent of the surveyed libraries, deposit collections are maintained by forty-three percent and a books-by- mail service is maintained by over twenty-five percent. The most frequent service provided from the bookmobile is interlibrary loan. Eighty-two percent of the libraries report that this service is offered on their bookmobiles. While no information is available on the level of use of the service, there is certainly an indication that a bookmobile can serve as an access point to the broad world of materials beyond its limited collection. Reader's advisory is offered by eighty percent of the libraries from their bookmobiles, and children's summer reading programs are promoted by seventy-eight percent. The next most common service is reference, which is offered on board by fifty-seven percent of the libraries. Over thirty one

Bookmobile Services Offered

Figure 6



percent of the libraries provide community information and referral service on their bookmobiles and the same percentage provide a paperback exchange service. Nearly thirty percent provide storytimes for children in the third grade or younger. Film programs and photocopier service are available from the bookmobiles of thirteen percent of reporting libraries. Eight percent offer electronic database searching and seven percent access to a microcomputer. Homemaking and craft programs are presented in eight percent of the cases. Only a small percentage are offering services which require resources beyond the collection and staff expertise, but the availability of special equipment is hardly unusual.

ONBOARD TECHNOLOGY

Nearly half the bookmobiles on the road have a radio installed, and thirty percent have a Gaylord charge machine for circulation records. More strikingly, seventeen percent have an automated circulation system or public catalog on board. While fax machines are rare at less than one percent, sixteen percent have citizen's band radios, and data packet radios are present in five percent, as are cellular telephones. If we assume no overlap with these three communication channels, then a quarter of the bookmobiles currently on the road have a two-way communication channel available, and are far from isolated from the resources of the main library at their remote stops.

Radios are not the only devices installed for staff well- being. A microwave oven warms the hearts of the staff of two percent of the bookmobiles, and refrigerators help another one percent keep their cool. Photocopiers ride one and one third percent of the units, and microcomputers six percent. Film projectors are available on less than three percent of the vehicles, but fifteen percent claim to offer film programs. While the nature of this discrepancy is unclear, it may be that on site equipment is utilized.

In the open ended responses 39 libraries reported planning to add automation facilities, and 25 planning to add audio-visual equipment.

PUBLICITY

No bookmobile stop will be successful if the potential patrons at the location are unaware of the presence of the service. A wide variety of media are utilized to make bookmobile schedules public. Ninety-one percent of the systems utilize printed schedules, and eighty-five percent report that their newspaper regularly prints these. Forty-seven percent manage to have their schedules regularly announced on local radio stations. Notices in church bulletins are employed by seventeen percent. Just over half the libraries post signs at regular stops. Visibility is also increased by more than a third of the libraries by having the bookmobile make appearances in local parades and county fairs.

In the open ended comments "word of mouth" was the most commonly mentioned publicity technique, although mailings, television spots, and newsletters all received some attention.

PROJECTIONS

What potential does bookmobile service have for the 1990's? This will depend in large measure upon the environment that the nineties provide. During the next decade vast technological innovations and dramatic changes in cultural and social patterns may well occur. Certainly demographic changes will continue and will impact library outreach programs.

In the past most bookmobiles have served geographically scattered populations and

rural communities of less than 1,000 people. Eighty percent of the surveyed libraries offer service to unincorporated areas. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census Reports, rural areas have been declining in percentage of population growth for the last forty years. There is no reason to doubt that this trend will continue and thus it is unlikely that many of these areas will grow to a size that makes the construction of branch facilities economical. Public library construction in the United States has averaged as much as eighty buildings per year throughout the eighties. The bookmobile, with its 100 new units per year, will continue to offer the most viable and effective means for servicing these populations. Indeed fifty-two percent of surveyed library systems believe that their bookmobile service will increase over the next five years and over ninety percent anticipate continuing service.

Women and children have always been the predominate users of bookmobile service. The surveyed libraries report that on average their users are sixty-three percent female and fifty-one percent below the age of eighteen. Daytime home, neighborhood, community, and school stops have been convenient for this clientele. By 1995, over eighty percent of women aged twenty-five to forty-four will be employed and over sixty percent of all women will be in the labor force. Most preschool children will attend nurseries and preschools. "The reality of the 1990's is that most children will be reared in households where the parents work outside the home. In 1985, approximately 30.6 million children under 18 years of age lived either in households with a single parent who worked outside the home or in two-parent households in which the mother was employed outside the home." Bookmobile service will need to adjust to this change of life style, and evening stops in communities and neighborhoods may well be the result.

There is a real explosion in the sales of children's and juvenile books, and there is every reason to believe that it will continue to the year 2000 when the "baby bust" generation will reach parental age. This has been reflected in the public library market but it is anticipated that public library budgets are likely to be reduced. The movable collection offers some possibility of reducing duplication of materials and at the same time expanding availability.

Twenty-five percent of bookmobile stops are made at nursing homes and senior citizen centers. Between 1963 and 1985 the number of nursing home residents increased by two hundred and ninety- six percent (from 445,600 to 1,381,300). By the year 2000 there will be a substantial increase in the number of elderly, and correspondingly, one might expect an increase in nursing home residents and users of senior citizen centers. The current eighteen percent of stop time at these facilities may well increase even if the percentage of number of stops does not.

Certainly the demographics indicate the real possibility of a requirement for increased service facilities for the elderly, day care centers, nurseries, and preschools, and the possibility of instituting stops at business and manufacturing complexes. The need for audio taped books, music, and old radio programs may well increase, and large print books may increase from their current six percent of the average mobile collection. Visual and auditory aids may well have a expanding place. The possibility of growing service to nurseries and preschools provides an opportunity for both emphasizing and filling the important need of young children to be read to on a regular basis. It seems likely that such centers would welcome the free provision of such services. It also seems likely that the provision of evening and weekend hours at safe, visible, and convenient neighborhood locations will become essential to serve working adults and families with limited time.

These projections are not strongly supported by the reported current long-range plans

of the library systems. While forty-five percent anticipate changes in types and numbers of stops, only ten percent are thinking about adding evening hours, and six percent weekend hours.

CONCLUSIONS

Some summarizing statements may be made from these results. Automation and two-way communication equipment have appeared on a significant number of bookmobiles. The bookmobile that does not promote a summer reading program nor offer interlibrary loan and reader's advisory service is the exception today. There appears to be a striking need for more continuing education opportunities for bookmobile staff. Audio and video cassettes and phonograph records are often part of a traveling collection. The video medium is becoming more important. In 1988 there were fifty million households with a VCR, and each rented between fifty and seventy-five tapes in that year. The growth of video collections and their circulation in public libraries has been very rapid. One must assume that the mobile video collection size will grow.

If one is faced with a need for multiple service locations where branch rent, maintenance, and utilities exceed twenty cents per projected circulation, then a bookmobile is likely to be an economic solution. The bookmobile is a significant service mechanism in both large and small communities. Half the bookmobiles in service cost under $30,000 and seventy-five percent have an annual maintenance cost of below $2000. Between one and three thousand bookmobiles are on the road in the United States.

In order to continue outreach service in the nineties it would appear that the location and hours of bookmobile stops will change. Collections will include more video and audio material and will emphasize material for children and the elderly. Staff training will increase with particular stress on serving the young and the elderly. It is difficult to predict whether or not the use of the bookmobile will grow in the last decade of the twentieth century, but it appears likely that it will not decrease, and that it has the potential for reaching just those groups which will be growth areas for the next ten years.

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